

**UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE SECOND CIRCUIT
THURGOOD MARSHALL UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE
40 CENTRE STREET
New York, New York 10007
212-857-8500**

**JOHN M. WALKER, JR.
CHIEF JUDGE**

November 17, 2005

PRESS RELEASE

Chief Judge John M. Walker of the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, jointly with Bettina B. Plevan, President of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, and Joan Wexler, President of the Federal Bar Council, announced the continuing and new members of the Joint Committee on Judicial Conduct, originally created in 2001.

The Committee's mission is to serve as an intermediary between members of the bar and the federal courts, in receiving confidential written complaints from members of the Bar regarding conduct (as opposed to the merits of decisions) of judges of the Second Circuit and the Eastern and Southern Districts of New York. The committee was created, with the concurrence of the Chief Judges of those courts, to address such complaints, in appropriate circumstances, in a "constructive, confidential and effective manner" with the approval and *ex officio* participation of the presidents of both bar associations.

The Committee's procedure involves reviewing the complaints and then taking such action as it deems appropriate, but the Committee's rules mandate that no communication may be made with any judge without the prior approval of the presidents of both bar associations. Further, the complainant's name, which must be contained on any complaint, is kept confidential and will not, without the complainant's consent, be disclosed to anyone other than the members of the Committee and the presidents of both bar associations. The rules also mandate that the Committee members must personally perform the Committee's work and may not delegate it to others.

The Committee's focus is on complaints that "indicate a possible pattern of behavior on the part of the judge" – for example, improper courtroom behavior, including improper treatment of and consideration to attorneys, witnesses, and others; improper physical conduct; persistent tardiness; or persistent failure to dispose of business promptly. In addition, the Committee may, in its discretion, also consider complaints dealing with a "single occurrence."

Chief Judge Walker stated “I welcome both the new members of this Committee and the Committee’s continued presence which can only help assist these courts in continuing their practice of judging in accordance with the highest standards.”

The Committee is comprised of six members who are appointed by the presidents of the two Bar Associations to serve staggered terms. The current members of the Committee are Barry M. Kamins, Loretta E. Lynch, Hon. E. Leo Milonas, Mary Kay Vyskocil, Gerald Walpin, and William E. Willis.

Persons wishing to submit a complaint to the Committee should send them in writing and signed, to the Committee on Judicial Conduct, c/o the President of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, 42 West 44th Street, New York, N.Y. 10036-6689.